

VZCZCXYZ0002
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUCNDT #0859/01 2662318
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 222318Z SEP 08
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4988

UNCLAS USUN NEW YORK 000859

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [PHUM](#) [CH](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: SHARP DEBATE ON UKRAINE MARKS UN GENERAL COMMITTEE
MEETING REGARDING THE AGENDA FOR THE 63RD GA

REF: A. STATE 98699

[B](#). STATE 85098

[C](#). STATE 99661

[1](#). (U) Summary: The UN General Committee (GC) met September 17 to inscribe items on the agenda of the 63rd UNGA, which opened September 16, and to allocate them to the Main Committees or Plenary. There were no votes in the General Committee, but several controversial items were deferred for future consideration. The UNGA plenary met September 19 to consider the General Committee's Report. In the General Committee and at the plenary, USUN spoke to express reservation about Serbia's request for an International Court of Justice advisory opinion on Kosovo's declaration of independence and to dissociate from decisions on that item. The General Committee's Report was adopted without further comment. End Summary.

Advisory Opinion on Kosovo

[2](#). (U) At the September 17 General Committee Meeting, the Serbian Foreign Minister spoke in support of inscription of their request for an International Court of Justice advisory opinion on Kosovo. Spain, Argentina, Egypt, and Myanmar also spoke in support of inscription. France spoke against inscribing the item. The UK did not object to the inscription but clarified that the position rested on procedural grounds and should not be interpreted as support for the request. Ambassador Wolff explained U.S. reservations about the request and dissociated from the decision to inscribe, which was made without a vote.

The Human Rights Council Report

[3](#). (U) Inscription of this item was not controversial but the General Committee decided by consensus to defer a decision on whether to allocate consideration of the Report of the Human Rights Council to the plenary or the Third Committee. France spoke in favor of allocation to the plenary. Argentina, Portugal, New Zealand, the UK, Mexico, Hungary, Spain, and Costa Rica concurred in statements of their own. Jamaica, Egypt, The Solomon Islands, Uruguay, China, Myanmar, and Niger spoke in favor of allocation to the Third Committee. No date was set for further consideration, but consultations will be undertaken to resolve the matter. This was a replay of General Committee action on the item last year.

Libya Withdraws item regarding the 1986 U.S. Attack

[4](#). (U) At Libya's request the Committee removed from the agenda the item entitled, "Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU on the aerial and naval military attack against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the present U.S. administration in April 1986."

Natural Resources & Conflict

[5](#). (U) A Belgian request to inscribe an item entitled

"Natural Resources and Conflict" provoked extended discussion. The UK spoke in strong support of inscribing "Natural Resources and Conflict;" Spain and France concurred. Egypt, supported by China and Namibia, proposed that the item's title be changed to relate to development instead of security. One wording suggested in Egypt's speech was "Strengthening National Ownership of Resources for Development." The Committee agreed to postpone discussion of the inscription of the item to a later, unspecified, date.

Commemoration of the Great Famine provokes debate

16. (U) Heated discussions ensued after Ukraine addressed the committee in support of its request to inscribe an item regarding the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Great Famine of 1932-1933. Ambassador Wolff spoke in support of inscription, noting that discussion of the content of the commemoration should take place in the plenary. Russia spoke at length opposing the inscription. Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan concurred. China and Argentina requested that the item be postponed until the countries affected by the famine reached consensus. Ambassador Wolff, after consulting the Ukrainian Permanent Representative, supported inscription of the item and called for a vote. The chair began the voting process. Russia made a speech on a point of order to attempt to change the question to be put to a vote to "the item should not be inscribed." Speeches by Belarus against the item and Poland supporting it followed. To block additional statements against inscription, Ambassador Wolff raised a point of order when Kazakhstan began to speak in opposition. GA rules provide that once voting has begun, members can only speak if raising a point of order relating to the conduct of the vote.

17. (U) In view of continued Russian objections to the formulation of the question to be put to a vote, the Chairman suspended the Committee to conduct consultations. During the suspension the Ukraine representative informed Ambassador Wolff that some of the votes they had "locked in" were no longer there and they preferred not to risk a vote. Wolff and Russian Permanent Representative Churkin agreed to accept the Chinese proposal that a decision on inscription be deferred on the condition that it be considered again by the General Committee within a time frame that would permit the debate to proceed before the end of 2008. As a result, the Ukraine was spared a probable defeat and will have an opportunity to lobby for additional support before the committee decides the issue.

Taiwan

18. (U) A September 11 informal agreement limited discussion of inscription an item allowing Taiwan to participate meaningfully in the UN to one speaker on either side. The Solomon Islands spoke in favor of the item, saying that their flexibility in wording the item this year did not set a precedent for the future. The Chinese Permanent Representative reiterated that there is one China. The Committee Chairman, following past practice, then announced that there was no agreement to include the item in the agenda.

Granting GA Observer Status for the Global Fund

19. (U) The Committee also deferred inscription of the item regarding observer status in the GA for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Egypt spoke and delivered a strong objection that the organization did not meet the criteria for Observer status. France, the sponsor, said that that determination should be made by the Sixth Committee after inscription and allocation and did not fall under the purview of the General Committee. (Note: That is the correct position, which has been consistently applied in similar cases). Portugal and Spain spoke in support of France's point. Argentina did not oppose, but said they would like more clarity.

Plenary Accepts the General Committee's Recommendations

¶10. (U) At the September 19 plenary, the GA accepted the inscriptions and allocations suggested in the General Committee's Report almost without comment. Contrary to expectations, no one spoke regarding the General Committee's decision not to inscribe the item regarding Taiwan's participation in the UN. (Note: Last year, 14 countries spoke supporting inclusion of the Taiwan item and 125 countries spoke against it. The Solomon Islands Permanent Representative told a USUN senior advisor that this year the policy has changed and they are trying to work with the Peoples Republic of China. End Note.) USUN spoke to express again reservations regarding Serbia's request for an ICJ advisory opinion and to dissociate from decisions relating to inscription of that item.
Khalilzad